

Watchung Library Advisory Board Minutes
Wednesday, January 9, 2019

Mission Statement

The mission of the Watchung Library Advisory Board is to advise, support and promote the interests of the Watchung Borough Public Library.

A meeting of the Library Advisory Board was held this day in the Bicentennial Room of the Watchung Library, 12 Stirling Road, Watchung, NJ 07069.

Call to Order

President Amy Fiorilla opened the meeting and called the meeting to order at 3:32 PM.

In Attendance

Amy Fiorilla, President
Tamara Benc, Member
Eileen Dicken, Treasurer
Daryl Eisenberg Knegten, Council Liaison
Margaret (Peggy) Ellis, Vice President
Maureen Greenbaum, Member
Patricia Kean, Valley View Middle School Librarian
Hannah Kerwin, Branch Manager, Watchung Library

Marianne Candiloros
Councilwoman Lindsay Goodloe
Virginia Hartmann
Cori Haveson
Nina Leach
Amber Murad
Councilman George Sopko
Kristin VandeCastle

Absent

Annette von Brandis, Secretary

Introduction

This is a meeting of the Library Advisory Board of the Borough of Watchung. This and all other meetings are conducted in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act.

Regular Business

The minutes of the November 7th meeting were unanimously approved.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Eileen Dicken reported as follows:

October ending balance	\$11,758.30
November Debits	
Aqua Service Professionals	\$75
Holiday Luncheon [Hannah Kerwin]	\$225
New Total	\$11,458.30
December Deposits	
Fines	\$181.58
Fish Donations	\$18.46
Cash back Holiday Luncheon	\$3.53
December Debits	
Staples 24 Library chairs	\$1,043.97
New Total	\$10,617.90

Dicken reported that she has negotiated with the company that services the fish tank down from \$100 to \$75 per monthly visit, anticipating an annual savings of \$300.

Amy Fiorilla reported that she worked with Bill Hance to use the borough's business account with Staples, and she found a lot price on their website to get a very good price on the new chairs for the Bicentennial Room, resulting in a delivered price of \$43.50 each. She notes that the chairs, which are a neutral color and commercial grade, can be easily transferred into the new library building. All present expressed appreciation for the improvement over the failing metal folding chairs that had been in the room.

Other Business

Fiorilla reported that Chris Korenowsky, Director of Public Services for SCLSNJ, said he expects the state to release information for applying for matching grants for library construction late this winter or early in the spring. He conveyed to her via email that he plans to meet soon with Borough Council. Mr. Korenowsky will be in charge of coordinating the grant applications for all the member libraries in the system, and will draft the requisite letters and applications. He has noted that all grant applications will originate through his office, and said he will keep all the stakeholder groups at SCLSNJ informed.

Library Manager's Report

Hannah Kerwin reported that our staffing is currently low, but she is changing the lengths of shifts to ensure that there is adequate coverage. The Youth Librarian is on a two- to three-month leave.

Kerwin explained that more administrative and purchasing tasks are being performed at the system level, reducing those tasks for professional staff at the branch level.

Kerwin again reported that the building is not being cleaned well. The bathrooms seem to be cleaned most of the time but other areas are not addressed adequately, and there is no interaction with the cleaning crew.

Council member George Sopko shared that this is a problem with all Borough buildings. He said that we do not get many bids for our cleaning contracts and encourages applications from interested providers.

Margaret Ellis suggested that, if the borough is too small to attract vendor bids, perhaps cleaning services would be another area where the borough could benefit from shared services with a neighboring community.

Kerwin said that the temperature in the building is uneven, sometimes hot, sometimes cold, and with hot and cold spots, although it rarely requires closing.

Fiorilla suggested that Kerwin make a list of the cleaning tasks that should be performed regularly, which could be forwarded to the DPW. Kerwin plans to write to Maria Fittipaldi with specific requests for areas that need attention; Council member Daryl Eisenberg Knegten and Amy Fiorilla will keep in touch with Kerwin on this issue and will help facilitate interaction as appropriate.

There was a discussion of ways to improve the functionality of the Bicentennial Room, including

- pulling up the worn, stained carpet and replacing it with an area rug that could be moved to a new space.
- Minor touch up of the paint on the molding trim.

The room serves as the borough's community meeting room and could serve better with some improvements.

Kerwin mentioned that the library lacks lounge furniture for reading newspapers or conversation. She said that the primary function of the library is to be an experience, not a storage facility, and that investing in new lounge furniture would provide a way to attract people to spend time in the library.

Council Liaison's Report

Council Liaison Daryl Eisenberg Knegten reported that all six Council members and the Mayor spoke in support of a new library at the Council Reorganization meeting on January 3rd.

Eisenberg Knegten shared that she looks forward to working toward a library and community center in Watchung.

Additional Other Business

Nina Leach reported that there are ongoing discussions about fundraising for a new library and community center. She said last year's controversy about the Council's vote to dissolve made 2018 "not a healthy environment for fundraising." Fundraising can begin in earnest once there are concrete plans for a site and a building. People will donate when they can see pictures of what the money will be used for and are assured the project will continue with no vacillation.

Sopko, noting that Mayor Balla is negotiating with the Exempt Firemen group, shared that he has a "feeling" that the Exempts are not going to act quickly. He proposed what he called a "back-up plan," which he had alluded to at the January 3rd Borough Council meeting, for a small building that could be constructed between Borough Hall and the Exempt Hall. He pointed out that Borough-owned property there goes "all the way back to Scott Drive."

Eisenberg Knegten reported that there has been progress in the negotiations with the Exempts and that "nothing is off the table."

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Watchung Library Advisory Board will be Wednesday, February 6th, at 3:30 pm at the library.

Adjournment

On motion and unanimous agreement, the meeting was adjourned at 4:46 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Margaret Ellis